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# Oral History Interview with Dr. Gordie Howell

Gordie Howell

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**Oral History Interview with Dr. Gordie Howell**  
(11/16/07)

WZ: Good morning.

GH: Good morning.

WZ: Today is Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup> 2007 and with me is Dr. Gordie Howell. He's going to participate in the Rollins oral history interview. Thank you for your participation, your contribution. So Gordie, tell me about your family background, where you grew up?

GH: I'm originally from the state of North Carolina. I did my undergraduate work at Western Carolina University, and upon graduation I received a commission in the United States Marine Corps, rising to the rank of captain. This was in the late 50s, early 60s. And I'm married, I have one daughter, and when she was about two years old we decided to leave the Marine Corps and I was stationed in Washington, D.C. And on weekends I was taking courses at the University of Virginia and that was my first, I would say first I thought about what I might want to do after the Marine Corps and it was to do something in higher education, whether as a teacher or an administrator. That's what led me to find Rollins and I needed to get a graduate degree, and Rollins gave me the opportunity to do a master's degree in economics. And during that year I worked full-time as a student. Rollins also asked me to do some things at the college, so I did some multiple duties, various things to earn extra money to pay for my tuition. Interestingly, at the end of that year I made friends with teachers and student administrators, and we'd settled in Winter Park of course and bought our first home. At the end of that year the dean of the college asked me would I stay at Rollins, and he offered me a position and the position was something like this. During that year a professor that taught economics in the undergraduate or the Arts and Sciences had been asking me to come in and do guest lectures and cover for him when he went to conferences and when he needed to be away. His name was Donald Hill who later on became the dean of the college a few years later. And so I was doing some teaching in economics, which was my undergraduate background and a Bachelor of Science degree, and I was working in the physical education department teaching scuba in Lake Virginia. I had thirty-five students each term and the Marine Corps and the Navy had trained me as a scuba diver so that earned me some extra money. And the coincidental part of this is the dean called me in after graduation, this was Dean Byrd, it's spelled B-Y-R-D I believe, and he said we'd like you to stay and we have a half a position in what was in the Crummer School, the school of, the graduate school of business, and we have a half a position in physical education, and we'll put the two positions together and each department will pay your salary. And we got around to what the salary would be and with both salaries combined it was less than I could make in the public schools. So I opted to take a job in the public school and I taught in the public school, Winter Park High School, where I was a football coach. And I didn't have a lot of a relationship with the college, but one day my third year of teaching in high school my phone rang in the principal's office, and in those days the teacher was called down into the principal's office and the parent wants talk to you or you got an emergency at home or something, and it was Dean Hill, he was then the dean of the college, and he said

Gordie we've got a position over here and we want you to come back. And I said well what is it Dr. Hill, and he said well it's in physical education. I said well I'm not a physical educator, he said that doesn't make any difference we know what you can do and you'd be good at it, so I came over and had an interview. We got around to talking salary and he said the salary is \$6900 and in public school I was earning \$6800, so I said I'll take it and that was in the spring of 1966 and I began during 1967.

WZ: Ok, let's go back. You mentioned that you grow up in Carolina. Were you the first from your family to go to college?

GH: Yes, yes. And my daughter was the second, and then Jackie, my wife, eventually graduated from Rollins. She finished her degree here in the Hamilton Holt School in Organizational Behavior.

WZ: Ok, you mentioned that after graduation you become part of the Marines. So were you part of ROTC?

GH: No, no I went in the Marine Corps as a volunteer and as a reserve officer, active duty reserves. But during my time in the Marine Corps, for some reason or another, I was offered a regular commission and interviewed for that and went through some processes and then was given a regular commission. So I could have stayed as long, I could have retired there, but you know I just had another mission in life and tried to fulfill it by being a teacher. Teachers touch the future and that was important for me.

WZ: Mhm. I seem to remember somewhere in your file that you also played, you were a running back or you did football during college there?

GH: Yes, when I was in high school, a small high school in western North Carolina, you might say I was a big fish in a little pond. I attracted some attention of college football programs. One of the most pleasant memories, eventful memories of my life, was playing in a football game in western North Carolina and after the game a fella came up to see me and talk with me, I was a senior, and he said to me would you be interested in coming to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and play football. And it caught me by surprise, I knew I wasn't even thinking along those lines, and I recognized who he was right away and he was the famous Charlie "Choo-Choo" Justice and he was scouting and working for the University of North Carolina after his career was over. And I was so taken aback by it that all I could think of was I need to get his autograph. And there was a cheerleader walking by as we were going to the buses and she had a program in her hand and I'm all dirty and sweaty you know football game's over, and I said can I have your program, and she gave me the program and I said Mr. Justice would you sign this (laughs), and he did. It's a great memory. Other colleges started to send me some information and Western Carolina and Clemson and Wofford (inaudible), but Western Carolina offered me a full scholarship and I went there on four years and I lettered four years as a running back. In those days in college football the players had to pretty much go both ways; you had to be put on defense and offense. And our coach had the name Tom Young; he was a legendary coach and a graduate of the University of North Carolina where he was a mathematician. And his analysis of the game was that defense wins games. So he

avored players who had an edge in defense over players when you had to go both ways as an offense. So I wasn't that good a running back, but I was okay as a defender, so I got to play more because I could play both ways.

WZ: That's very interesting. But, you mentioned that your undergraduate major was economics. Is that the subject you were teaching at Winter Park High School?

GH: No, I was teaching social studies and mathematics.

WZ: So what do you think about the change of your career after you come to Rollins? That you become a physical education professor?

GH: Well, in the physical education department there were no academic courses in physical education. As a matter of fact, one of the things that I am very proud of is that through the years I've had the college, I've enabled, helped the college in getting a curriculum that had to do with other than the fitness aspect and sports aspect of the college. Anyway, the first year I was here I was a director of men's intramurals and I held that job for fifteen years and I taught activity courses. In the spring of 1967, the president was Hugh McKean. One day Hugh asked me to come to his office, President McKean asked me to come to his office, and I went over and we sat down and he said Gordie we need some help with the men's soccer program. It had fallen on some hard times and basically was a glorified club, it was called varsity but it didn't have the same structure and the same mission. He said we need some help in that program and I would like for you to take it over. And I said well President McKean I don't know a lot about soccer, you know my background's football and I played baseball and ran track in high school. And I'd seen some soccer, in the Marine Corps I'd traveled to other countries, you know in Portugal and the Islands and Spain. And he said to me you'll do just fine, he said just play with the ball and you'll learn, and I said okay, and then he said and for you doing this we're going to supplement your salary, remember we're making \$6900 a year, supplement your salary \$1000, I was like that's great you know. I said I'll do that and I went out and got books and went to clinics and I started playing myself, but as I started to leave President McKean said oh Gordie by the way, for every season you have a losing season we're going to deduct \$100. And I often thought with the success we had if I'd been quick on my feet and if I'd have said with every season we have that's a winning season will you increase it \$100. So I would have my own original IRA, but he was very supportive of me and we became very good friends through the years. As a matter of fact, my wife was his right hand person the last ten years of his life and Jeanette's life.

WZ: So before your time who's the coach of the soccer team?

GH: They didn't really have a coach. They had a student, his name was Ted Staley, and Ted was an X-Cluber, played soccer, and then when he wasn't playing I guess he was in the graduate school. He was kinda running the program. Joe Justice's name was on the brochure, I guess a matter of record because it needed a faculty person, but Ted was the coach. Actually I think he might have been a playing coach and he was graduating and there was a technical advisor named Ernie Rochet. He was German and he worked for Tupperware International, which its offices were down in south Orlando, and he was being recalled to Germany by

Tupperware. So they lost their technical advisor and Ted was graduating, so the opening was there and President McKean was very fond of soccer, he started the program and did want to see it flourish and he just asked me to take a go at it.

WZ: What was the role of Herbert Helwig?

GH: Well, when Hugh McKean, President McKean said we're going to have soccer at Rollins because you know football had been terminated which was historically the only men's sport, not the only men's sport but the sport that everybody was most enthusiastic about, and the college decided not to pursue that for a number of reasons, philosophical and financial. He had seen, President McKean had seen soccer in India where the kids play homemade ball and barefoot, and he came and brought that vision back, and went through the process of really fooling a lot of the other college presidents, he said we want to have a soccer program and we want you to have one too (laughs). And he would tell me the story of how he used to call the president of Stetson and said well we've got a soccer team now and we want you to compete. But, we didn't have one yet. And he called the Florida Southern president and said we've got a soccer team now and I want you to start one. So he got four schools interested. And he also then asked Herb Helwig, who Herb was a German and soccer being the sport of choice in Germany and the background that Herb had he asked Herb will you help me with the soccer team, you know anything about soccer, and Herb said I know everything I know it all. So Herb, he said, come out and help when you can. Herb became the first technical advisor appointed by Hugh McKean, President McKean, and he stayed with it for a number of years. And Joe Justice was the title and Herb was the technical advisor and then Ernie Rochet and students started to take it over until I became the coach.

WZ: So what is your record as a coach of the soccer program?

GH: Oh my. Some things you want to, I want to remember the hundred and probably sixty-seven wins, but I don't want to remember the fifty losses. But, (laughs) it was something like that during the fifteen-year career.

WZ: Well that's quite remarkable. So you never get deduct for \$100 each year?

GH: (Laughs) No. What I'm really proud of is the teams that I coached went to nine NCA playoffs in the fifteen years; we just had some really good players. And I never did have any scholarships, we attracted young men who loved the game and we increased the rigor of the schedule and the practice sessions and we kinda set some traditions in motion and it fostered, it grew.

WZ: Ok, when you first started in the middle of the 60s, what is your impression of the college? About students, about school.

GH: It was evident that Rollins was then what we would refer to as a pure liberal arts, a great emphasis on literature and philosophy, history, strong theater arts programs, an emerging business school. The student body was small and I thought of the student body as being basically a conservative student body with seriousness of purpose, but fraternities and

sororities were much more dynamic then in many ways than they are now. There was a lot of volatility, there was a lot of celebration, and there was a lot of competitiveness associated with fraternities and sororities, both athletically and academically. And it was a quiet place; we didn't have half the buildings that we have now. I've seen most of the buildings we have now, I've seen them under construction and to fruition. Brilliant faculty, you know I marveled at it and I made friends with most of new philosophers or theater or business, sometimes during the course of the subsequent eight or ten years. I was able to cultivate a friendship and the people like they are today, they're the strength of the college, the faculty is the strength of the college. During the period of the 60s of national student unrest, there was a great deal of civil disobedience throughout the country at colleges and universities and dissent with the Vietnam conflict. Rollins students seemed to be about the same. I recall only one student demonstration of any substance at all and it was one day the students wanted to march quietly and peacefully down Park Avenue starting at the north end and marching toward the college, and it was a relatively modest turnout but it was conducted in a very sincere manner with no serious incidents. And kinda to give you an idea of the type of soccer player I had, when I saw type they were very dedicated and very loyal, and one of the goal keepers, his name was Bob St. Lawrence, wanted to march. And he had come and asked me for permission (laughs), and he asked me, Coach would it be all right if I marched in the demonstration today (laughs). And I looked back at that and that wouldn't happen today, no the students are fiercely independent and would resist strong anybody's resistance to them pressing their views.

WZ: You mentioned about the Dean of Faculty. What other faculty members that you remember you, that influenced you and you became friends when you were at Rollins?

GH: Well, to cite one would be to discredit others. I had an interesting relationship with Ray Smith. Ray Smith was a legendary historian and he kinda passed away at the wheel, he was active until the day he passed away. But, he loved baseball. He was a lecturer and he had a folksy way about him, just a brilliant fellow, and he was teaching up until I guess his 70s. But, he influenced me a great deal. I do know and I can say this with all sincerity is if you were a baseball player in a history class you were treated differently (laughs). He loved his baseball; he never missed a game, and he and I had many hours of conversation. John Ross, physics professor, just we had a wonderful relationship. Interesting, John Ross was a physics professor at Rollins and he also asked me about a coaching job for Glenridge Middle School for boy's soccer!

WZ: Really.

GH: Yeah, he loved soccer but never played, but he would watch all their games. He and I would talk and we'd do Xs and Os, and doggone it if Dr. Ross didn't take that team in two years and won Orange County Championships (laughs). And he was a physics professor at Rollins and there must have been something they're drinking in the water at the physics lab, but they love soccer. But he and I had a, Roy Kur, Ed Borsoy, both served as faculty representatives during my ten years as athletic director and we became close friends. In fact, Roy Kur and I were everyday emailing arguments and discussions about sports. And he's retired from teaching now and he's a writer, he's written a wonderful book about his son in baseball and we were very close. When, I've had good relations with people even though my

discipline as an athletic administrator or an athletic coach at times appears to be pulled apart from the academic ability, let's call it ability of many of my colleagues, but for some reason or another that's never interfered with my ability or capability of making friends. For example, in colleges and universities, generally speaking, in my experience there are those who do not share the view that athletics is consistent with academic objectives, college athletics being consistent with the academic objectives. But, they don't hurt your programs, they don't damage your programs and especially if you make friends with them. There are a small percentage who are philosophically opposed to sports. Bob Carson and I were great friends, Dr. Bob Carson, and he and I had arguments all the time about the value of sports in the college experience. But, by cultivating friendships with him when I needed to do something that was a little bit irregular, it was easier to do it. I'll give you an example. When I wanted to upgrade the soccer schedule, I was a soccer coach and coordinator of men's intramurals before I became an administrator, and I wanted to upgrade the soccer schedule. I wanted us to play nationally known teams, in addition to the Sunshine State Conference teams. And I knew that they were coming south to play University of South Florida, University of Miami, Florida International University, but we were Division II and they were Division I. And I know those coaches would play us; the University of Connecticut, the University of North Carolina, University of Virginia, just great teams. But they come down to play like on a Friday or Saturday, when I say come down most of them come from the north and the east coast, and I wanted them to play an extra game. But, I didn't have a day where we could do that because we had Women's Sunshine State Conference, so I wanted to play games on Sunday. Well nothing had ever been done of a formal athletic nature in the history of the college that I'm aware of on Sunday; baseball, basketball, nothing like that on Sunday. So I started to line up my, you know, get some permission from people or get some understanding. One of the first persons I went to was Ted Darrah. Ted Darrah was the venerable, curmudgeon dean of the chapel, highly respected, wonderful fellow, in the 70s. In fact I think I had his daughter in one of my classes and think I got to know him even better then. So, to play games on Sunday was, it was a deviation from (laughs) the conservative Rollins College. Well of course the chapel was very (laughs) well attended and it had a strong impact on college life; the chapel services and those. So I went to Dean Darrah, visited him in his office and I said, Dean Darrah I would like to for these reasons, I gave him the reasons, play varsity soccer contests on Sandspur Field on Sundays. And he sat across from me and he had a little short black cigar about that long in the side of his mouth and glasses down to here and he looked at me and he said, Gordie if you promise not to do any sermons before noon on Sunday I promise not to interfere with your games on Sunday (laughs). That was one chore accomplished and then I had to get the city to agree for lighting Sandspur, first time in the history of Winter Park there would be illumination over the city at periodic times intervals in the history of the city, lights! You know that's awful, that's just awful when you can't illuminate the, geez, so I had to go back before the zoning commission and I was objected to it, the Winter Park Zoning Commission, by the police who testified that lights on Sandspur Field would cause more accidents on Fairbanks Avenue, that people would be distracted. A young mother was there with a babe in arms at the commission hearings and said of the noise and the lights, I live a quarter mile from Rollins and it will keep my baby from sleeping and the children will have trouble sleeping. The people who live across the lake, across the Virginia said noise from your P.A. system will disturb us at night. And some city commissioners said light poles in downtown Winter Park, that's too distracting, we have a theme here you know an architectural theme and that will be a conflict.

So they rejected my appeal for variance. And I also remember that Mr. Morgan, Jesse Morgan, was the treasurer and finance at Rollins and he's sitting back there in the crowd (laughs), there's a big crowd at the Winter Park Commission chambers, and he's kinda grinning at me struggling with answering his questions. And he was also a very good friend of mine. So we tried to think of something to do before the second hearing, they told us we had to provide additional information, that sort of thing. So we came up with a scheme. And that was to identify the primary objectors of having lights on Sandspur Field and invite them to a tea; a tea, a Sunday afternoon tea. And we got a family across the lake, an older, their roots in Winter Park were deep, they were a very nice family, very well-to-do, I could see the house across the lake from my office today. And we asked them to host the tea. And so I went over there one Sunday afternoon, they provided tea and cookies and things for anybody who objected to the lighting of Sandspur Field to come and hear what I had to say. And I did, and we talked about each of those issues. Another objection I want to include was that the chapel tower at that time was alleged to be the most photographed night scene in all of Central Florida. You know brides and husbands and grooms and parents and alumni, and it is true, you'll find a photographer out there taking a picture of the chapel lighted at night, it's beautiful. And the lighting on Sandspur Field would distort their, where they take pictures. And before going to the second hearing, John Ross came to see me, Professor Ross. And he said I'm going to be supportive. Because the faculty had a hand in everything then, when the faculty-athletic committee really contributed to and their oversight was wonderful, we don't have anything like that now, we've got a faculty-athletic representative but we don't have a faculty-athletic committee, we just we have to take everything. Professor Ross said I'm supportive of you having, this is my friend Professor Ross, I'm supportive of you having lights on Sandspur Field, all the right reasons will extend the playing day, will attract attendance, all the, it'll be cooler for the athletes, but he said not on Wednesday nights. And I said what, why can't I have a game on Wednesday nights? (Laughs) He said that's the night I take my astronomy class to the top of the Blue Science Center and we study the constellations and you can't have lights out there on Wednesday nights. So each of those objections I had to meet them somehow, confront. So the second hearing was about two or three weeks later at the Winter Park Chamber. The lady with the baby was there, the police were there, the objectors that had been over to the tea were there, and I made my proposal again and each was asked to say something and each was supportive of lighting the field. The only change that I had to make, the city said, I wanted 90-foot poles, they said you can't be higher than 70 and you must paint the poles green (laughs). They made some other; you couldn't have music after 9 o'clock. Of course that's fallen by the wayside, nobody's enforced that for years. But they approved it. And I had attained, I had to develop the funds for it. Wayne Carse, a local oilman, gave us \$16,500. Bill Miller gave us \$25,000. And we raised the rest; the total cost was \$76,000. The Winter Park Power Company, I had made good friends with the Regional Director of the Winter Park Power's office, I call them directors or supervisor, and I said I need help on this project so we've got money for the equipment. And he said well what we'll do we have a program here at Winter Park Power, I guess it was Winter Park Power & Light, that for voluntary service by our employees we give them an equal time off. So, they provided the labor and the equipment to install those lights no charge and gave their employees who worked on it, you know putting in the poles, digging the holes, going on lining the lights, he gave them compensation, compensatory time off. So it really became a community town working together achievement.



WZ: That's really an amazing story. So this happened during your tenure as athletic director?

GH: Yes, right, right.

WZ: I seem to remember you also overseeing the concern of renovating the boathouse?

GH: Right, right. During that time when I was an administrator, we raised some money to put in the Martin Tennis Courts, the Alford Stadium, the Alford Boathouse; we renovated Bradley Boathouse, and got the first \$1,000,000 on the Alford Sports Center. Interesting how that worked. Development asked me to make "the ask", you know there's the initial request, on a number of those projects. They would determine who the possible donor could be through their research and giving records and then if it was sports-related they'd generally ask me would I ask the donor, the first time when that happened on all those projects. But, President Bornstein had a donor or development dinner at the Citrus Club in downtown Orlando, and it was a black-tie affair. And at that dinner was Tom Johnson. And the Tom Johnson Center is named after Tom Johnson. And it was a fun dinner and everybody enjoyed pre-dinner cocktails and post-dinner cocktails. After the dinner, Tom Johnson came over and sat down with me. Tom's in his 70s by then I guess and I think he was on the Board of Trustees at the time. He was with a very successful legal firm in Philadelphia. I'm not sure. Anyway, we're sitting at the table, he and I, and people were milling around talking and having a good time. Other donors were there. And Tom and I started talking about college football. And Tom told me about his career as the manager for the Rollins football team when Jack McDonald was the coach and Joe Justice was one of the players, and how much that meant to him. And we started talking about formations and he said we ran the single-wing formation. And I'd played single-wing formation in high school. So I said did you, on a napkin we had a napkin and a pencil, I said well did you run a play like this? And he just opened up. Did you run a sweep like this, because I remembered all those plays from my high school career. Full back off tackle, take it back around hand, quarter bucking back they'd call them, and we drew them. And then he would draw one on, we'd get another napkin. And he's pretty happy at this time about what's going on, and he left having had a good experience about Rollins College football. I took those two napkins and I put them in my own coat pocket and a few days later I wrote him a letter and I included those two napkins with all the pencil drawings, his and mine, on single-wing plays. And in it made "the ask" for \$1,000,000. That's how we got the first \$1,000,000. Well, that's not how we got it, but it contributed to it, and shortly thereafter it was announced that he would contribute \$1,000,000. It was decided by the administration, after a period of time, that we had plans worked up and what it would cost, the renovation was the first attempt at what we were gonna do, and it was very much it was like \$3,000,000 or \$4,000,000! They decided rather than that the Mills Memorial Library needed renovating, and so the Development Office and the President and Warren Johnson, asked Tom to redirect that \$1,000,000. And so the first \$1,000,000 went to the Mills Center. And then my administration was over and they had to continue to raise money, I think it cost \$13,000,000 because that period of time it escalated so high. But it was the beginning of a good thing.

WZ: So how did you handle the transfer of your career from professional coach to become an administrator for the sports program?

GH: You know it's kinda interesting; it is very interesting how I was at work. I didn't apply for the position for Director of Athletics. I was Director of Intramurals and I was the soccer coach, but it seemed like everything was falling in place. Very successful programs, I'd done graduate work where one of my, I wrote a model for the education of athletic administrators which became pretty useful to other people, and it was just an academic interest of mine, not really a vocational interest of mine. Because I met so many athletic directors and I saw so many good things they were doing and how they could do things and then maybe some different ways to do things. So I'm the college, I had the, President Seymour had appointed a woman, well take it go back a little bit. Joe Justice was the Athletic Director and head of the Department of Physical Education. He had become friends with Ed Jucker, the legendary Ed Jucker, who was the coach of the Cincinnati Bobcats I believe it is, who led them to the National Championship and coached Oscar Robinson in the NBA, and then left NBA and was doing physical education at RPI. And Joe and he had become acquaintances at national conferences. So Joe Justice asked Ed Jucker to come to Rollins to take over the basketball program. And Boyd Coffie had been the coach of the basketball team and he wanted Boyd to stick primarily with baseball. So he brought Ed Jucker here, invited him and got him an appointment as head of the Department of Physical Education. And Joe gave up his physical education job duties and Joe kept his athletic directorship job. Well as you might expect it was volatile. When you have the physical education department and the athletic department and all in one tiny facility, one small budget, limited facilities, it became a lot of controversy about getting money and priorities. And so, Ed was not happy and Joe was not happy and they both subsequently decided to leave the college and retire. But Ed Seymour, to help the college, help the department excuse me, hired a woman to be the women's basketball coach and to be the business manager for athletics. And so another person entered into the fray. So there was Joe, and there was Ed, and there was Gloria. Gloria Crosby, an excellent women's basketball coach. It became much more unsettling and divisive. With Joe's retirement and Ed's retirement, Thad Seymour appointed Gloria Crosby as the new Director of Athletics. That was his way of trying to build the bridges and resolve the differences, and praying that all those functions, important functions -- in fact, two. One teacher head, one person kinda doing the supervision. Well, it was not met with a great deal of success, pretty much among the men coaches who disagreed with much of Gloria's philosophy. So Gloria decided to leave and it was in August I believe, no June, I believe in June. And the college needed to have a Director of Athletics. They needed to have a Director of Physical Education because everybody was gone. So they decided to, they asked me would I be the interim Director of Athletics and chairman of the Department of Physical Education from August until a search could begin. The search would begin in the fall; September, October, November the national search would be done. So I took it over to breeze the gap. Not asking for it, but once again trying to be a good soldier and do, keep it going. When they had this search, Arnold Wettstein was the chairman of the search. John Ross was on it, on the search committee, Virginia Mack was on the search committee, there was a sociologist on the search committee, and there was a physical education person on the search committee. They had a hundred and fifty, over a hundred applications for the position, and they narrowed their search down to two people: one from Dartmouth, a gentleman from Dartmouth, and a gentleman from Northwestern. And they were invited to campus and you know the ring of fire candidates have to go through and faculty interviews and the administrators' interviews. And somewhere along the way, before those interviews had been completed or the decision had been made, Arnold Wettstein came to my

office and said, Gordie the search committee would like you to apply for the permanent position of Director of Athletics would you do that? And so I said give me some time to think about it. And one of the things I did in thinking about it was to go around to key persons at the college and ask the question quite simply: how do you see me in this position? You know my background, you know where I'm from, what I do, how do you see me? I went to deans, I went to the coaches, I went to other administrators, and I went to Thad, Thad Seymour. And I didn't know what I expected. But now I realize this is the way it should have been. I said President Seymour, I've been asked to be a candidate for this position. And I asked him the question: do you see me functioning in this position under your administration? -- In Thad's office. He looked at me and he said, Gordie, I in no way will interfere with the process of any selection at this college from administrator to coaches or teachers. And then he paused and then he said, but Gordie if they select you I will be the first to ring the chapel bells. And they did select me. That's how I became the Director of Athletics.

WZ: There's a story in the alumni records, "Students First, Athletes Second", would you say that's your philosophy?

GH: Yes, that is true. The Athletic Department at that time had two hundred students I guess student-athletes, did not have a required GPA, coaches were pretty independent with the way they managed teams and budgets and things. The student-athlete by and large could have had a higher level of appreciation if you worked at it among the college you know our various constituencies, our teachers and our administrators. There was some work needed to be done there. The curriculum, there was not an academic curriculum for the Department of Physical Education. So I saw that as part of my mission to improve those things or at least get them in our consciousness about the contributions of the athlete and how we could raise the importance of athletics for the holistic approach, you know mind body the old dualism that many previous civilizations have handed down to us. That's why I worked very hard at getting the college to approve the lifetime fitness course. Then I was able to get one course at a time through the Academic Affairs Committee having to do with sports. Sports & Society for example, I started that, Ethical Issues & Contemporary Sports. The athletic coaching, let's see I started, I got the college community to put it in the curriculum. And we raised the GPA to 3.0 to be eligible; you had to earn a 3.0. And so over a period of years, I felt that the impact of the student-athlete, it was becoming more positive. A positive impact. During my tenure, I believe three graduating salutatorians gave the address, gave the graduation address, were student-athletes. That was a tremendous change from our previous history, not to say there weren't really really academically oriented students before, and there were, but they were in single numbers rather than double digits and we started the move in the direction. When people saw me as a person who would place their academic experience not above but parallel to, because I thought they should be, and I still believe they should be supported equally. If a student wants to be an athlete, an athlete wants to be a good student; they're very compatible it's just that you have to work at it. And so I did think like in student conferences and seminars I had them together a lot. You know, three hundred athletes in the Bush Science Center many times talking about the issues and drug testing and their conduct. So I think the, I like to think that those improvements were made, and I suppose that was the idea of this person writing about the importance of athletics as part of the college's dynamics. And faculty started to accept. I remember, Dan DeNicola used to have administrators meet every Monday and every issue was

open for discussion. And so I took to the meeting once, one spring, I wanted the college to give academic credit for the course, which is now Health & Wellness. We've changed the title through the years as we've changed content. And we're sitting around with department heads and other administrators and I made my proposal. Dan had people vote on things, budget centers for example. There were times we would vote whether we would buy a new shell for the varsity crew or we would put air conditioning in the basement of some building. You had to kinda make your argument at the end of each year when your budgets were being developed. So, I made my pitch, for this to be included as a General Education requirement. And it was voted down and voted down a number of years, year after year after year, by the faculty. But I remember Bob Carson, Bob and Barbara were wonderful people, Barbara Carson, and we were good friends. Bob voted against it and he's sitting right beside me at the meeting and when the meeting was over he didn't leave. I didn't leave because I wanted to talk to him. And he looked at me and he said, Gordie, he said this has nothing to do with you, he said I am Phi Beta Kappa and he said I cannot philosophically agree with the value of a physical education course getting academic credit. And a lovely friend for many years, but he did, that was a kind of mindset with some people, first you had to learn about it and then you had to counteract it. And there were some conversions going on at that time and he was not going to be converted.

WZ: So tell me about your teaching career after you stepped down as the Athletic Director in 1992.

GH: Right. One of the things that the college gave me or awarded me when I left the administration was a year sabbatical. And they didn't tell me to do anything special, but sabbaticals are supposed to be productive, you're not supposed to go home and paint your house all the time. And I knew that I wasn't a physical educator, I didn't want to teach activity courses anymore, but I always felt that the study of sport and its relationship to the humanities was being omitted at Rollins and it was a serious void I thought. And I still think that to this day, there's a serious void. That there is a relationship between sport and philosophy, sport and history, sport and physics. So I decided to get another degree. And I searched all over for a college or university in this country that would allow me to work on another master's degree, I already had one, another master's degree. And I found one or two that had something that I wanted, but I didn't want to do sports management because I'm not too keen on the applied sciences, that's a business more than it is my area of academic interest. So I talked to Dan DeNicola one day and he said, well there's some information here from some European countries have their universities have these degrees, I would say they're much further advanced than we are in making the academic relationship. One was the University of Leicester in Leicester the United Kingdom, just what I wanted, a master's degree in the sociology of sports and sports management. So I used my year and went to England and got that degree. At the same time I developed the course about the sociology of sport and called it Sport & Society. And that was, I've been teaching that for, and I had to go before the academic affairs committee, so I developed a kind of Dog and Tawny show, which was slides. And I invited the Dean of the Department of Sociology, the head and chairman of the Department of Sociology at Rollins, who else, the Provost to come down to the boathouse where I had assigned myself office space and classroom space when I had to power to do it. One of the last things I did was select my own office and classroom. I was told that I could have any office I wanted, you just pick your office, and they were starting to build the new sports center so I could have one on

the second level with nice windows and things and I said no I want to use that little closet which had been a liquor closet, a liquor storage closet for alumni, and I wanted to clear all that out and have the little space like this to be my office. But I brought them all down, brought the principals down to the and I put on this little slideshow about the sociology of sport with requesting that I be allowed to teach it. And it has historically been very successful. And along the years, the cause of that success, the consequences allowed me to teach other courses. So it's been kinda a one-person effort in the academic side of sport. I wanna change that before I leave this college, I wanna change that, I want the college to do a minor that I constructed and want to present one of these days when I can find the opening and the right timing to do that. But, I developed a course that I am very pleased with and it's the sports and antiquity course, Athletics of the Ancient World, a field studies course. How I developed that course is amazing and a lot of luck. I conceived the course, I developed an itinerary, and then I went to Greece. I preceded my going with letters to the dean of the American School of Archaeological Studies and the Greek School of Archaeological Studies and the British Museum with what I was coming for and what I wanted to do. I had appointments with all three of them, I went on my own, spent about three weeks I guess, two weeks, and I went to those places and I said this is what I want to do, where I'm from, what I want to do, will you tell me if I can do it, what needs to be done so I could do it better, can I make this itinerary which is we visit about fifteen different sites in a two week period. They were somewhat helpful, especially telling me where I had overplayed my hand in terms of time and distance, the topics were just right and I came back and I developed the course, the syllabus and course description. And then offered it every other year, it's been made very well, and I fine-tuned it through the years. And in the year 2000 on my sabbatical, I did an unusual thing, somewhat unusual for my age and experience. I went to Greece looking for different sites. You know, the main Pan Hellenic sites and some smaller sites and museums and temples and sanctuaries I knew about, but I wanted to see what else is out there. Looking for unknown sites for athletics in the ancient world. So I got myself a backpack and I started across Greece. Walking, I rode on railroad cars, I hitched rides on tour buses, I stayed in little places, little towns, and I essentially walked for three weeks, site to site to site or got there by hook or crook, and I found new sites. And made friends. Language was never a problem, I could hand signal, and most Greeks out in the area do not speak anything but Greek. I found some interesting sites there were not well known. I'd gone to the Harvard School for Classical Studies' library in Washington and spent several sessions there looking in the Archives for, in their records for sites, you know people you don't see in the literature very much and that was helpful. And I came back with a revised itinerary and we've used it ever since.

WZ: Is that trip you find that coin, the ancient...?

GH: Yes, uh no, I found that on one of the field studies, Delphi. The only reason that I have it is that I promised those people, the archaeological society, that I would share it with students or they would put me in jail. But I found the coin to be very interesting. We were at Delphi, one of the Pan Hellenic sites, one of the major Pan Hellenic sites. Isthmia, Olympia, Nemea, and Delphi. That was our last site; we'd been there for about two and a half weeks. The site in Delphi is split by the main road, the upper level is the archaeological ruins and the stadium, the lower level is the gymnasium and temples and treasures. So my students were kind of spread out, it was about 4:30 PM on that day and I'm walking by myself like a little boy looking at the

ground, my hands behind my back, and I see this odd-looking formation I couldn't tell if it was a coin or a rock or something, and it was different from the rest of the stones. It was muddy, you know nothing's paved, it's out in the woods in a rural area, and I picked it up and looked at it and just put it in my pocket. You're not supposed to do that; you're not supposed to take anything off the premises. But following when I got back to the guard shack and I was gonna give it to the guard. It left, it was at 5 o'clock and he had left, and the only way you had one exit to go out, you couldn't come back in but you could go out. And so I didn't think of it for a couple weeks and then I found it and I started looking at it and I said, this is a bus token from Brooklyn or it's a metal object. We had in the foreign language department had a renowned coin collector. Numismatics I believe is the art, or the science. And he had retired just a few years before. I knew him, he's a good friend and I called him and I told him, I think I have found something that looks like a coin, how do you clean it? And he said well I'm into gold and then he said I don't know about old coins, but he said there is a firm in New Jersey that deals in nothing but old coins and artifacts. Here's their number. So I called them and I said, how do you clean what may be, it was covered with mud and patina, they call it patina, you know the corrosion. I said how do you clean something like that, like this? And he said well the first thing we would do is put it in a plastic container, put a small portion of vinegar, a small portion of olive oil, tuck it away and come back three weeks later. That's what I did. They said if it's a coin or a metal object you should be able to flip the patina off with your thumbnail. And that's what I did, I flipped it off and there was a coin. And I had no idea what kind it was. So I took it with me the next time I was in Greece and talked to the Greeks about it. No I didn't talk to them that time, this was the second time. I went to the British museum and I'm on my knees, on the floor at the British museum looking at ancient coin brochures, pamphlets and books. And I'm holding that coin and I'm looking at the books. I think I must have looked really weird, I was on the floor and I'm going from one to the other. I saw nothing about ancient Greek coins. I said I don't know what to do. I was walking out, no I went upstairs, and I saw this office. On the door it said Ancient Greek Coins and the Library and nothing fancy about it at all, just a little sign, and I went (knocks twice) and a lady poked her head around and I said, hello I'd like some help identifying this coin. And she said well let me see. I let her have it. And ten minutes later she was back, she said in the Archives I deal with this coin, and she told me all about that coin. She said this coin was a bronze Roman coin. I didn't look in the Roman exhibit, I looked in the Greek exhibit, that's why I never found it. And it was minted during the reign of King Theodosius in 337 Commonaire, in honor of his second son Constantinos. And they validated it for me, and I've showed them to my students ever since.

WZ: That's really amazing. So what other courses you been taught here?

GH: Let's see, I've taught Health & Wellness to help the department because they didn't have enough. I've taught Athletic Coaching Theory a number of years and Olympism & The Olympic Movement I constructed that course. As a matter of fact it's interesting, I taught it as an intercession here one time and it's not being taught next intercession, it was not approved, but the day before yesterday I received an email from the president of a university, the president of a university! Asking me would I review their course, a graduate level course in Olympism and the Olympic Movement and give them my thoughts about it. And I'm gonna do that for them. They sent me the course, the syllabus, and an overview of each unit. And so

when the dust settles after my exams, I'm gonna review that course for them, but it stems from the fact that Rollins has me listed on their public relations information that I'm a so-called knowledgeable about the Olympic Games. I'll do that for them. But, what's another course? I guess Anatomy & Physiology, excuse me Physiology of Exercise was a course that I began and I got Rich Morris to teach it. I've got twelve of them.

WZ: That's great. Tell me about your trip to China this summer.

GH: Well, it was a wonderful trip. It goes back to, I believe, when I was invited by the International Olympic Academy who's sponsored by the International Olympic Committee in Zurich. The International Olympic Academy is in Olympia, Greece. And it's like a college, where academicians, Olympian scholars, and students are invited to come there in the summer and study the Olympic movement and the concept of Olympism. I was invited, and I went. And at that conference we were divided into small groups and each day after the presentations we had a problem with the antidote being or whatever, cheating or new sports or whatever. We had a problem that all of us worked on in groups, I had a group of about eight. We sat around the table at the academy, a very modern and beautiful library, very well equipped; it was all about the Olympics and sport, antique sport. Well during that conference, during those meetings, I'm in there with several people from China and professors and one gentleman from Taiwan, one gentleman from Iran, one gentleman from England the United Kingdom, one gentleman from France, a woman from France, and a gentleman from Germany. And we sat around there for a little while and nobody seemed to be doing anything and me, old aggressive me, I said let's get to work on this. And so during that time I sort of facilitated the conference because you had to make reports the next day to the body. And I kind of facilitated, I made friends with those folks and what have it, a cup of tea or a cup of something at the end of the day. Well one day via email came an invitation from the People's Republic of China Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee at the Humanistic Center at Renmen University, would I come this summer to Beijing. And that's how I got invited, I presented two papers, one to the Capitol Library, the major library in Beijing to, there were librarians and citizens who were interested in the topic and they advertised it, you saw some of the possibly the advertisements that I brought back. And I made a presentation to probably three hundred people about, my topic was the convergence of Olympism and volunteerism, whereas I urged the Chinese organizers how to use volunteers. And they were light years ahead of me of course, anything I said they would have said well god we've already done that, they've already done that, but anyway it went well. And I enjoyed it and I went around to see all the venues under construction in Beijing. You know the old \_\_\_ ceremony and the Birds Nest, the \_\_\_ torium, the tennis courts. The people in Beijing of course were very, very proud, very proud. I was once asked before the Athens Olympics the question about could Athens pull it off, the last Olympics. And I was asked by some reporter and I said well if they do they'll be highly complimented and they'll surprise most of the world. I don't think it's the same way with the Chinese Olympics. They'll do it; most of us will be very surprised. And then they'd be complimented. Labor, no question, they've got around the Birds Nest the construction worker villages. There are tents, brown tents. There are people working 24 hours on the venues triple shifts. They never stop and then they live in those pram tents, six or eight people, and do their shift. And illuminated for night work they never stop. So they'll do it.

WZ: Now, looking back after more than forty years, so how do you view your Rollins career?

GH: Well, hmm I've done some things I've wanted to do and like any other career some things didn't get done that I wanted to do. But by and large I'm satisfied. This last project that I want to do, not that it's the last, not that I'm in any retirement mode, but I guess the last one that I really want to take on is to convince the college community to a minor in Sports and the Humanities. I believe very strongly that the significance of sport is so great in the world that to deny sports connected to business and deny sports connected to history, to continue to be close-minded as we are, my summer colleagues are, I don't say that maliciously but it's just that they're uninformed or don't want to be informed about the relationship between sport and our economy. I want to change that. And so if I can, I already had one department that jumped at the opportunity and I guess as a matter I'm sure he wouldn't mind but when I talked to the physics department they said we'll do it in a minute. Sport science is something we would like to do. I just got to get about five or six others.

WZ: Any regrets? Anything you'd rather do differently?

GH: Yes, some of, there were times when my objectives was not consistent with colleagues and I wish that I had done a better job in that, with some of my colleagues. And now you look back and you wish I had decided to say this differently. Well I have this belief that in all human nature sometimes, all of us, our priorities are not the same as others. And sometimes people temporarily set their conscience aside of what they really believe in the interest of some sort of artificial progress. And we regret doing that, even if it's only a minute, and I could have done better things sometimes.

WZ: Anything I may have missed that you would like to add to this session?

GH: I could tell a lot of stories but I'd probably bore everybody, but one of my favorite people in all of my career at Rollins was Fleetwood Peoples. When I came to Rollins as a student, my year here and the years that I worked side by side with him and he was a true naturalist and he taught swimming to the estimated ten thousand people in Lake Virginia. And he and I it was, we were just seamless. You know, I'm right out of the Marine Corps and he had been at Rollins forty years at that time and he was very kind to me and the transition from my previous law and order type of background he made very easy for me. One of the stories that I enjoying tell about, Fleetwood Peoples had an ancient diving helmet, a metal, it had a plate glass window, I mean the old diving -- I can imagine Alexander the Great, he dived under the sea with an ancient diving helmet. Something like that (laughs), it was copper and it was three or four feet high with a rope on the end of it. And he loved to take Rollins students and he went down under the water and you'd just place it over your head on the top of the water on the surface and you'd sit down. And then through that plate glass window you can watch the bass and watch fish, you can watch the currents, and students loved to do it. I even did it a couple times myself. And when I was teaching scuba, Fleet wanted to learn scuba, he was just a great partner, cause I used the boathouse, this was before \_\_\_\_\_. Well, he also taught canoeing. And one day a student over toward what was the McKean House, Windsong, overturned because it was windy. And the student was struggling to get, you could see from the boathouse, Fleet had a pair of binoculars, he watched everybody. And Fleet had a little



johnboat that he used as his coaching boat, and he jumped in that johnboat and he picked up that diving helmet, and he puts it in the bow \_\_\_\_ because he's fly. And he went over to the other side and he did a U-turn around the student who was struggling and stopped. That diving helmet fell overboard. And of course it was a treasure for him, I don't even know where it is to this day, but it's obviously a wonderful artifact. And he came back with the student and the next morning I was down there he said to me, he said how could I find that diving helmet? I said we'll find it for you. So I took my class of six that day on scuba and took them over there on a boat and we did what's called a running jack stay, it's a search technique that I learned in the Marine Corps for searching for objects on the bottom. You put out a buoy and an anchor, go down to the bottom and then the first person down at the bottom runs a line, however long you want it which was fifty feet, and then you send your divers down and they each take in intervals from the end to buoy and you move together in a circle searching the bottom. And we weren't down there ten minutes until one of my students signaled to come to the surface, we had a signal to come to the surface, so we came to the surface, and he said I've got it! So we took that, we went down and got the diving helmet, the water was so clear, it was in the Ella D I guess, the water was so beautiful. There's a spring over there by the way, a natural spring close to it. Got the diving helmet and brought it back to Fleet. He was so happy, he was just so happy! Well that was on a Thursday or Friday. My class came back on Friday, I probably shouldn't say this but I will. There was a case of Budweiser beer on my desk for those students (laughs). But yeah, that was his reward and he was so happy. But there are a number of experiences with Fleet that should not be forgotten.

WZ: Okay, I think we have run out of time. I really want to thank you for your contribution, I really enjoyed the conversation and thank you for everything.

GH: Thank you for having me!

WZ: Oh you're welcome.

**1:23:37**